

*William R. Grant*

THE  
SORROWS OF SLAVERY,

A POEM.

CONTAINING A  
FAITHFUL STATEMENT OF FACTS  
RESPECTING THE  
AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE.

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BY THE REV. J. JAMIESON,

A. M. F. A. S. S.

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1789.



TO  
LORD GARDENSTON,  
CHAIRMAN  
OF THE  
SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND,  
FOR THE  
*ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE,*  
THE FOLLOWING  
POEM

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT,

AND

VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

LORD CARLETON

GENERAL

OF THE

SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

AND

ASSOCIATION OF THE SAME TRADE

THE FOLLOWING

TO

BEFORE THE

BY THE

OF THE

AND

VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*THE principal design of the Author hath been to represent simple historical facts in the language of poetry; as this might attract the attention of some who would not otherwise give themselves the trouble of looking into the subject. Through the whole of the poem he hath carefully avoided exaggeration. Circumstances are faithfully stated from different publications, particularly those of the Rev. Messrs. Ramsay, Clarkson, Newton, and Nicholls; and of Mr. Falconbridge, Surgeon. The poem is divided into*

# ADVERTISEMENT.

*three parts, according to the natural division of the subject: the first containing a description of the methods used to procure slaves on the Guinea Coast; the second, of their treatment on the Middle Passage; and the third, of their situation in the West-Indies.*

# ARGUMENT.

## PART I.

ADDRESS to the Ladies of Britain, claiming their attention to this mournful theme, as in all respects worthy of the exercise of their tender feelings.—Invocation.—Sailing of the Guinea ships.—Measures adopted by the African princes for supplying their demands.—Various arts practised by the Black traders.—Description of a slave-market.—Just retribution of Providence in the fate of many of the Black traders themselves.—Progress of the slaves from the fairs to the ships.

## PART II.

Situation of the slaves on board.---Attempts to destroy themselves. --- Affecting story of Calabar, from Mr. Clarkson's Treatise on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species \*.---Reflections

\* Since the Poem went to press, the Author has seen an authentic copy of the depositions of *William Floyd* of Bristol, mariner, and of *Little Ephraim Robin John*, and *Ancona Robin Robin John*, of Calabar, with respect to this affair, taken at Bristol, 30th

### ARGUMENT.

addressed to the Guinea merchants.---Sufferings of the slaves on board.---Story of Zilia.---Insurrection.---Treatment of the unsuccessful insurgents.---Conjectures of the Negroes as to their fate.

### PART III.

Arrival in the islands.---Preparation of the slaves.---Different modes of sale. Vendue. Scramble.---Fate of those who are unfit for the market.---Interview between a Servant of Jesus and some Negroes.---Story of Calypso.---Ideas of Christianity entertained by the slaves.---Treatment in the plantations.---Address to the American States,---to Britons,---to our honourable Representatives in Parliament.---The iniquity of this traffic demonstrated from various denunciations in the Divine Law.

September and 9th November, 1773. With these the account given in the Poem agrees in all the leading circumstances. But there are several others mentioned which considerably aggravate the villainy of the perpetrators.



THE  
SORROWS  
OF  
SLAVERY.

---

PART I.

---

YE British fair, whose gentle bosoms heave  
The sigh of pity at the tale of woe ;  
Whose lovely eyes, like sun-beams darting thro'  
A watery cloud, the roses underneath  
In sweet profusion scatter'd oft bedew,  
And lend new grace to ev'ry varying tinge ;  
Why purchase sorrow in the tragic scene,  
Or court it in the fancy-labour'd tale,  
Why like a mother, in her frenzy sad  
Who hugs the pillow for her clay-cold babe,  
The formless child of fiction fondly nurse,

And wish it real, that its misery  
May every hidden wheel of mercy move :  
A real tragedy, unmatch'd in song,  
While Afric forces on your sight averse ;  
Where every village opes a dismal scene,  
Where acts of death unnumber'd chill the soul,  
And freeborn Britons act the bloodiest parts ?  
The treasures of benevolence in vain  
Why thus exhaust ? Why Pity's thrilling cords,  
That twist around your hearts, so idly rack,  
While up her fable curtain Afric draws,  
Disclosing many a Werter lost to fame,  
Whose harrowing tale is only wrote in blood ;  
And many a Desdemona, who not needs  
A Shakespeare to describe her woes unjust,  
Nor craves a Siddons to call forth your tears ?

They are not fair like you. . But can the hues  
Of Nature various tinge the secret soul ?  
Say, does not the alembic of their hearts  
As pure Compassion's genial drops distil  
As your's ? Oft do they not o'erflow  
The cisterns of their eye-lids too confin'd ?  
Does Grief ne'er wring their heart-strings ? Or can  
Pain

Make no nerve thrill? In that warm clime alone  
Does Love's electric fire shoot thro' no vein,  
Rapid, resistless, hurrying on the blood,  
As its elastic channels it would burst?  
Of cruel absence finds no lover there  
The saddening influence? Can he, in his heart,  
That void insufferable never feel,  
Thou oft, fair maid, hast felt; a void so great,  
A world, without the object lov'd, to fill  
Is far too little? He hath felt it too.  
To him his dusky mistress is as fair  
As thou art to thy lover; fairer far  
Than thou, with all thy changeling-charms, wouldst  
prove.

Is there no mother here, whose melting heart  
Darts thro' her eye, when smiling on her babe;  
Who fondly strains her empty breast to yield  
Those drops reluctant famine yet hath spar'd;  
Or feels new pangs more piercing than the first,  
From its fond claspings sever'd by the sword?  
Superior rank if thy complexion plead  
In Nature's scale, the justice of its plea  
Let the superior brightness of thy soul,  
Let Nature's first-born, gentle Pity, show.

No fabled Muse I summon to my aid :  
The song of truth such aid ignoble scorns.  
O Thou, Almighty Father ! who hast made  
Of one blood all the nations, and assign'd  
To each on this thy earth his several spot,  
Who from thy height transcendant deign'st to look  
On all the various sons of men, and own  
All as thy offspring, blacken'd by thy furl,  
Or by thy snows made white, to Thee alike :  
Inspire me, while I sing the general rights  
Of human kind, and mourn the inroads fell  
Man, thy poor vassal, dares to make on man.  
From Thee this song begins, All-powerful Foe  
Of Tyrants, who Thy image great debase,  
And thro' Thy image aim a thrust at Thee.  
This song is thine ; for Thou at first on man  
The precious gift of Liberty bestowd'st,  
And in thy love unparallel'd at length  
Didst send thy Image, perfect as Thyself,  
To purchase Liberty for man enslav'd,  
Ev'n in man's nature, and proclaim this boon,  
Worthy of Heaven, to ev'ry race of man.  
Inspire my lay, and of humanity  
Let th' inspiration bless'd thro' Britain's Isle



Spread like the fire the wither'd heath that burns !  
For what are all oblations made to Thee  
Without humanity ? Intrusion gross,  
A daring insult to the God of Love,  
Who claims this proof of love to him sincere ;  
That, like the vapours rais'd from earth to heav'n,  
To bless the earth more genial it return.

From Avon's stream the bounding vessels pour,  
By prosperous gales invited to the main .  
Their sails expanded, every breeze embrace,  
And wing their way to Afric's arid shore.  
Meanwhile the various despots of her soil,  
Impatient for the visit yearly paid  
By strangers, to the eye alone more fair  
Than they, and envious of the short-liv'd peace  
Their vassals owe to Europe's gentler storms,  
Ope every sluice of war, and those burnt sands,  
That thirst in vain for water, drench in blood.

Not Gallia, tho' for politics far-fam'd,  
Half the inventive faculty can boast  
In framing reasons for illicit war,  
Or can so sage apologies devise  
For breach of faith, where greedy interest claims  
The death of thousands for a Tyrant's meal.

'Tis not a thirst for fame impels to war  
The numerous Chiefs that rule these parched plains.  
Tho' base this appetite, in balance weigh'd  
Against the bliss of millions, baser still  
What wakes the maddening rage of battle here.  
The idol-cask is empty, that contain'd  
The pleasing poison brought from Britain's Isle,  
Which taught the Prince of Damu to forget  
His cares, in sweet intoxication drown'd.  
What shall the loss supply? A thousand lives  
Are naught in value to a Monarch's dream.  
Tho' every drop should as its price demand  
The copious tide of life that idly flows  
Around a vassal-heart, 'tis not too dear,  
When greatly paid a Monarch's thirst to quench.  
Forthwith his fable legions he convenes,  
And arms for war. 'Gainst Afou, neighbouring prince  
And friend of youth, by solemn oaths ally'd,  
In peace rejoicing, unsuspicious, proud  
Of friendship never by a frown impair'd,  
He rushes on relentless. In his train  
A thousand angels of destruction aim  
Their shafts unerring. Nor complains the Chief  
Tho' every life, unmercifully spar'd

To linger out in Slavery's death prolong'd,  
And only by the force of fetters held  
In cruel durance, costs a tenfold death.

By Europe's luxury themselves enslav'd,  
Oppress'd with wants their fathers never knew,  
These little sovereigns quarrels often feign  
In concert, that by fines reciprocal,  
In bloodless victims only to be paid,  
Their mighty mutual wrath may be appeas'd.

Believe not, injur'd Briton, the false tales  
Of credulous fools or slaves of Avarice.  
Its dread tribunal Africa can boast,  
Where criminals to slavery are condemn'd.  
But tho' erected in the awful name  
Of heaven-born Justice, often is it not  
To tread her under foot, or while she's woo'd  
With solemn mockery, to make of her  
A very harlot, and her shame increase  
By seeming honour; Justice to transform,  
By hell-born arts, into Iniquity?  
Here those are often doom'd for foulest crimes,  
Whose spotless innocence the Judge well knows.  
New crimes are artfully devis'd; new laws  
Are daily fram'd for those more venial far

Than any yet in papal lists enroll'd ;  
The code still growing with the Monarch's wants :  
And oft the crime is older than the law.

But is the call too urgent for delay ?  
All palliatives are scorn'd ; the Prince's need  
Ev'ry expedient fully sanctifies.  
Thro' every sacred, social tie at once  
He boldly bursts. See ! where Dahomy's king,  
In midst of night and darkness ominous,  
His gloomy spoilers crowding after him  
In dreadful silence, like some demon fell  
From outer darkness loos'd for man's destruction,  
Flies to a village of his own domain,  
His fatal torch blue-gleaming in his hand,  
Of death dire meteor ! Sacrilegious wretch !  
Dar'st thou apply it ? Ah ! the deed is done.  
The wavering flames, now towering high, on heav'n  
A horrid lustre throw ; anon they sink,  
As conscious of its more than midnight-frown.  
The peaceful habitants, in horrors wak'd,  
In vain attempt to fly. Here flames pursue ;  
And there a foe unknown, with pointed steel,  
Their flight withstands. Some eager to escape,  
In stupefaction rush'd amidst the flames :



While some, of half its terrors death to rob;  
That fate least lingering greedily embrace,  
What shrieks of misery rend the wondering sky,  
Mix'd with the bellowing of the raging fire,  
And howlings of the spoilers merciless!  
Here mothers, frantic, fearless of the flames,  
Burst thro' their volumes, searching for their babes,  
For ever to their fond endearments lost;  
To their primeval principles reduc'd,  
Amidst the burning, undistinguish'd mass:  
And now they Heav'n implore, and then accuse.  
There, children trembling with an orphan heart,  
Their parents dear, infirm, decrept with age,  
Strive to discover; by their piercing cries  
In pity melted, or to madness rous'd.  
Heard so distinctly are their shrieks of woe  
Amid the ruins wide, as to provoke  
To mournful fellowship in death the sons,  
But not to save the fires. What tenfold grief  
The remnant rescued from the flames awaits?  
Already rest of all that man holds dear;  
Bound by their countrymen, their kinsmen, friends,  
In hated chains, at their own King's command;  
Their souls indignant burn to meet the flames

They basely fled, not half so keen as those  
That now consume them inly, and to mix  
With kindred spirits in their flight serene  
To realms of liberty. It wounds them more  
Life from their native Sovereign to receive  
At such expence, than death in fiery form  
Had pow'r to wound, the ravager unknown.

If such the ways of him whom Nature calls  
The Father of his People, rais'd by Heav'n  
To guard them from Oppression's iron rod;  
Why, Britons, wonder that some vassals base  
Their humble treading in his path should deem  
No heinous misdemeanour, or that they  
Should one more proper for themselves devise?

Oft, child of Freedom, in thy favour'd isle,  
The numerous herds of cattle thou hast seen  
To market driven, with heat and thirst annoy'd,  
Lowling and panting, while the cruel lash  
Urg'd their reluctant pace. Thy fellow-men  
Thus brutify'd thy darkening eyes ne'er saw.  
But such the prospect Negroland presents.  
To human markets, regularly held,  
The traffickers in human flesh repair;  
In flesh alone, for here the nobler soul

Nor raises, nor diminishes the price.  
Tho' train'd by strangers to the horrid art,  
Those are not strangers now by thee observ'd.  
The sons of Afric trade in Afric's sons.  
With what insulting coolness they proceed !  
See ! how they creep along the lengthen'd ranks,  
Each naked captive, with a scrupulous eye  
Surveying, as they would a senseless brute.  
Mark ! how their brethren they in worth debase !  
" This one is lean, and that one feebly walks ;  
" This smooth-skin'd fellow toil has never known ;  
" That pregnant woman by the road will die."——  
They dodge, and lie, and swear the market low :  
By every jockeying trick degrading man.  
Left any fault lie hid, each trembling limb  
They roughly press, and turn them round and  
round,  
Without regard to sex. O ! Modesty ;  
'T were profanation scarce to be aton'd  
In such a tale to speak thy virgin name !  
Inhuman monsters !——Ha ! I've gone too far.  
I British ears may daringly offend.  
These dusky merchants are but caterers  
For other men, the pimps of Europe's lust ;

And Heathens too, in blindness who fulfil  
The orders by enlighten'd Christians giv'n.  
Yes, Britain, these are thy blest'd profelytes,  
Proficients wond'rous in that glorious path  
Without thy *zeal* to Afric scarcely known.

“ But whence,” dost thou enquire, “ this waste of  
men ?

“ What fertile land, of nations ample hive,  
“ Can constantly from its exuberance vast  
“ Pour forth ten times ten thousand every year ?  
“ Are they in certain districts bred for sale  
“ As we breed cattle, sons of slavish race ?”

O Britain ! oft by neighb'ring nations dup'd,  
But here by thy unnatural sons alone ;  
How long believe those silly tales that owe  
To Avarice, juggling and carnivorous,  
Their form mis-shapen, and the offspring fair  
Of candid Truth and weeping Mercy scorn ?

From various climes these wretched captives come,  
Where never European wanderer trode,  
From climes to geographic skill unknown.  
Oft, ere the general rendezvous they reach,  
The changeful property of divers lords,  
To real or pretended crimes, while some



Owe loss of freedom, far the greatest part,  
To modes of capture scorn'd by nobler brutes.  
In these extensive regions hundreds live  
By ravishing th' unwary, or the weak;  
Men-stealers by profession, who the purse,  
Not as its owner half so much regard.  
Mark in yon file the young and handsome maid,  
Whose eyes have form'd a rivulet on her breast.  
Returning from a scene of festive joy,  
While thro' the lingering twilight eve's bright star  
On earth had hardly glanc'd, within a cry  
Of her companions, near her father's house,  
A villain from a thicket rush'd upon her,  
And dragg'd her off; threat'ning with dreadful oaths  
Death instantaneous, if she gave one cry.  
See, nigh her, one who hugs her screaming babe  
With fond anxiety. Well may'st thou hug,  
Disconsolate mother! for it cost thee dear.  
To bathe it in the cooling stream she went;  
But while she sportive press'd the lambent wave,  
A tyger hideous, in man's form disguis'd,  
Sprung on her from amid the rustling reeds,  
Where he from morn to eve had lurk'd for prey.  
Ah! wretched, for still greater woes reserv'd!

Ev'n now a ruffian trader pays thy price  
Reluctant, but thy precious load excludes.  
In vain those shrieks, in vain dost beat thy breast,  
Doom'd never more to suckle thy lov'd babe.  
Wrung from thy folding arms by ruthless hands,  
Thy sole solace for ever must thou leave!

Behold that king-like man, whose fleecy head  
Grey Time has bleach'd, whose rough cheek he hath  
plough'd.

Beside him stands his son, a finewy youth,  
Who from his cloud of darkness darts a smile  
Contemptuous on his sneaking purchaser.  
Invited to a neighbouring hamlet's feast,  
They unsuspecting went, and pass'd the day  
In social mirth and rural luxury.  
But as they backward trac'd their well known way,  
Their faithless host and base confederates  
Their darkening path with treach'rous purpose  
mark'd.

Soon did they overpow'r the feeble fire;  
Not so the son. Thou seest his cheek deep-scar'd.  
He mow'd his enemies, as a sportive boy,  
Pleas'd with his prowess, would the thistle's beard.  
Soon had he routed them, and loos'd the thongs

That bound his father; but their stanch-mouth'd  
dogs,

Taught for the purpose, from their litter train'd  
To blood, and kept for baiting men alone,  
He could not hold at bay. Hence these deep scars,  
And such the battles most of these have fought.

Ye ruthless ravishers! whose prey is man,  
Admire the justice of All-seeing Heav'n,  
That marks you as the victims of its ire,  
You oft entangling in the fatal snare  
For others laid, and for your course prolong'd  
In villainy, as pledge of payment full,  
Wrenching the yoke round your own stubborn necks.  
Why pity crave? What heart would lavish it  
On you, whose bowels ne'er in pity yearn'd?  
Your parents, brothers, wives, and warlike sons,  
While by the secret influence of Heaven  
Their powers are all to non-resistance lull'd,  
With silent awe your righteous fate confess,  
Oft by their conscious boding hearts foretold!  
And ye, who by your sov'reign, lion-like,  
As his jackals insidious, have been hir'd  
To fill the royal glutton's ravenous maw,  
Repine not, though, when in your ravage wide

By force superior stay'd; he you disown;  
To his own pow'rs of credence give the lie,  
And sell you with the slaves yourselves have shar'd:  
Fools! is not this the Tyrant's last reward;  
His parting pledge of gratitude, the coin  
In which he liquidates such swelling debts?  
Are you the first of traitors thus betray'd?  
The only motive still hath interest been,  
To your's alike: and could you ever dream  
That he his own would sacrifice for your's?  
He breaks his faith; but who can faith expect  
In intercourse that for its basis owns  
The abjuration of its very name?

Now from the field of purchase slowly moves  
The troop reluctant, tottering every step  
Beneath the cumb'rous, forked yoke that binds  
Each in succession to the slave before,  
Throughout the mournful, far extending file.  
Each back is with the sustenance depress'd  
Ungrateful life unwillingly requires,  
Dragg'd on thro' tedious desarts, which nor bread  
Nor water yield, nor human footsteps shew.  
From various regions pillag'd, and from tongues  
That no alliance claim, they in their march



The mournful consolation often want  
Of fond Narration's interchange of woes.  
Each bears in partnership his neighbour's yoke,  
But cannot lighten his most pressing load  
By sadly-pleasing fellowship in grief.  
In bags, suspended from their deep-gall'd necks,  
Of helpless babes the superadded load  
Enfeebled mothers bear. Some big with child,  
The cries of famine, grief, fatigue, despair,  
With those of parturition, void of hope,  
In melancholy symphony conjoin :  
No husband near to minister solace,  
Or make the agonizing mother deem  
Those sufferings blest'd, a living pledge that yield  
Of faithful, mutual love : no father fond  
To hug and bless his puling, passive babe !  
The only cordial to her fainting heart  
Of putrid water a few drops supply.  
Ev'n now a travailling woman's cries I hear ;  
And such the mournful strains in which her child  
First-born she welcomes into hated day :  
" With transport many a woman would a son  
" Behold, and all her pangs anon forget ;  
" But I unhappy must the barren bless,

“ And view my womb’s fruit as my greatest curse,  
“ In ripeness dropt into this world’s wide field,  
“ But to be crush’d by stern Oppression’s tread.  
“ Thrice happy they, whose fruit hath in the bud  
“ By some propitious blast been kindly nipt !  
“ But thou, my harmless, once long-wish’d-for  
    babe,

“ Art to thy wretched mother a new source  
“ Of endless sorrows, far more sharp than those  
“ Late ushering thee into this scene of woe !”

    Some onward trudge, in fullen sorrow whelm’d,  
Revolving gloomy purposes within  
The dark recesses of their troubled souls ;  
Nor deign they with one solitary groan  
To grace the triumph of their savage foes :  
While they, whose anguish more tempestuous, like  
Deep-cavern’d waves, by secret winds enrag’d,  
Bursts foaming from their mouths with merciless  
    lash,

To all their just reproaches no reply  
Receive, but what the cruel gag affords,  
The mute confessor of a cause accurs’d.

    With hunger, thirst, and anguish overpower’d,  
One swoons, and, senseless, to the ground would  
    sink,

Did not his yoke, by fellow-sufferers borne,  
His drooping head sustain, and drag along  
His body motionless, by naught restor'd  
To feeling, but the poignancy of pain.  
Another seems to swoon, but not to him  
Avails the barbarous remedy. Grim Death,  
Less cruel than his churlish ministers,  
Here in a moment of compassion bland,  
Bursts the clay cell, and bids the prisoner fly.  
Suspended is the march; but only 'till  
The breathless corse is from those fetters loos'd,  
Already by its airy tenant scorn'd.  
The lump exanimate is from the yoke  
Inhumanly dropt on its kindred soil,  
And left without a simple shroud of dust  
To hide it from the beasts and birds of prey.

When drowsy night her opiate kind prepares  
To lull a world besides, one balmy drop  
She scarcely to these miserable deigns.  
No more their limbs at liberty they toss.  
Not ev'n their dreams can Freedom's phantom fair  
In mercy visit, with illusion blest.  
Ingenious Avarice hath charms devis'd  
To exorcise this spirit, to its peace

So unpropitious. To the massive yoke,  
Their arms outstretch'd in forc'd embraces cling;  
As sleeping slaves the oars they're chain'd to hug.

For many moons the weak survivors plod  
The howling waste, in numbers waning still:  
Not of the period of their pilgrimage  
Presuming one conjecture vague to form;  
Nor conscious of the greatly-fear'd event,  
That may its awful consummation prove.  
At length, another waste of waters meets  
Their eye astonish'd, endless to the view,  
Unequal, like their native rivers now  
Serenely smiling; suddenly enrag'd,  
In mountains rising, as it dar'd to lash  
The frowning sky. What terrors new appal,  
When brooding o'er the trembling deep they spy  
A monster wing'd, in its tremendous form  
Unmatch'd by all their wilds or waters yield,  
From its strong ligaments struggling to break loose,  
And gaping to devour them as its prey!  
They shuddering turn, and gaze, as if a ray  
Of Hope might dart from some blest space unknown,  
Hope's boundaries far beyond; but gaze in vain.  
They heav'n assail with looks of menace proud,



Provoking its less dreaded thunderbolts  
To end their miseries. Then on earth they frown  
With piercing eyes of fury, as they dar'd  
Its dreadful mouth to open and devour.  
Anon are open'd all the springs of grief,  
Half-dry'd by constant running: all their gods  
They raving supplicate; they wring their hands,  
And beat their breasts, and tear their trembling limbs.  
But vain these transports; dragg'd or goaded on,  
'Till by the ravening monster gorg'd at once,  
They shrink with horror still to feel alive.

Some down the rivers in the light canoe  
Are hurried to the coast. Bound hand and foot,  
They to the leaky bottom are consign'd,  
Where day and night in filthy water drench'd,  
They basely lie, like nature's offals vile.  
What can the silly pomp of flags display'd,  
Or music's joy preposterous avail,  
But Misery's sensibility to wake,  
And wound afresh by Scorn's empoison'd sting?

A new survey these wretches must endure  
Before the haughty stranger, whose stern word  
Hath made them captives, and who seems to count  
The condescension infinite, that bids

Such caitiffs under *him* still wear their chains.  
Those whom Disease relentless, Famine's rage,  
Or ceaseless toil hath pin'd ; whom Nature's hand  
Hath roughly touch'd in their formation hid,  
Or cruel accident hath marr'd ; whom age  
Hath shrivell'd ; or whom chains have lam'd,  
Are scornfully rejected. Curses fell  
Are by their owner on their guiltless heads  
Invok'd, as if their misery were their crime.  
In merciless stripes oft breaks his fury forth.  
Not seldom, every other price refus'd,  
The horrid price of their offenceless blood,  
Shed instantly, alone can reimburse  
The Tyrant's costs, and glut his fell revenge.

But still th' unnatural cargo to complete,  
New plans of villainy must be essay'd.  
Some paddling round the vessel, her strange bulk  
Admiring, fearless of deceit, are seiz'd.  
Some, while they wish to barter Afric's wealth  
For Europe's toys. By invitation kind  
From the perfidious sons of Ocean, some  
Allur'd, the floating prison gaily tempt,  
Ne'er to revisit their beloved shore.  
The treacherous beverage of the stranger lulls

To pleasing stupor ; soon they wake in chains,  
Robb'd of that precious blessing Lethe's draught  
Might in oblivion drown, but not restore.

PART II.

AT length they from their moorings slowly  
loose,

Their sails unfurl to the propitious breeze,  
And shape their course to Caribbean Isles.  
Like undistinguish'd lumber in their hold,  
Between the decks the living cargo's stow'd ;  
Forming, like some ant-hill, a moving heap ;  
Tho' not, like its laborious tenants, free.  
The galling fetters each to each confine,  
Their legs and arms enclosing in rude grasp.  
Oft also is the haughty neck enchain'd.  
They every motion by consent must make ;  
Frequent in quarrels, when their Babel-tongues  
The biting of distorted chains provoke.  
For so inventive is the cruelty  
Of their harsh jailors ; as if simple bonds,  
To guiltless negroes were a boon too great ;  
Transversely they are bound, in studied forms  
Most adverse to the suffering captive's ease.



No place to stretch their torpid limbs they find,  
And scarce to lie ; convolv'd they rather seem.  
At morn, to taste the healthful breeze, on deck  
They're roughly summon'd. Ev'n stern Cruelty  
At times to shuffling Avarice homage yields :  
But still a frown its greatest favour clouds.  
Of Freedom this mere shadow, to the deck  
The chains that rudely rivet them, efface.  
There, rang'd in mournful ranks, they faintly spy  
Their much-lov'd country flying from their view,  
As if ashamed to own them as her sons.

What shrieks of grief unbridled, of despair  
Deep groans and hideous yells the welkin rend !  
Heav'n's tempests rude in madness they invoke  
To bless with shipwreck, that their mangled limbs  
At least may once more kiss the darling strand.

See ! where one, watchful of the moment kind,  
When from the ring-bolts loos'd to leave the deck,  
Leaps overboard, the partner of his chains,  
Of life less lavish, dragging after him ;  
And fills a monstrous shark's deep-forked jaws,  
Expanding to receive its shrinking prey.

All sustenance some obstinately scorn.  
If dreadful threats avail not to subdue,

On their weak limbs, while pinion'd to the mast,  
In merciless repetition, the keen scourge  
Draws its deep furrows. If they still refuse,  
Wrench'd open are their parched mouths, and down  
Their throats reluctant are the liquid means  
Of life pour'd violently. Their lips at times  
Th' embrace consuming of live coals endure.  
But ineffectual oft these cruelties;  
The wretches find that death they long have sought  
With unabated ardor, and acquir'd  
At such expence of suffering exquisite;  
Firmly resolv'd, by vengeance on themselves,  
At last on their oppressors to be veng'd.

Among the mournful groupe a captive lay,  
Whose sullen greatness told his former state.  
Few words he utter'd; still the hollow groan  
And eye indignant injur'd pride betray'd.  
Oft did his chain mate urge him to reveal,  
By what vicissitude of Fortune he  
This destiny had found. With looks alone  
Of stubborn grief as often he reply'd.  
One day, at length, half-melted into tears,  
He thus the fulness of his soul effus'd.

“ My name is Ephraim, of the princely race

Of Calabar descended, born to rule.  
In friendship with the English long I liv'd,  
Their trade protected, and to Justice gave  
All who their ample rights to injure dar'd.  
On others their impostures frequent I  
Reluctant saw; but consciousness of right,  
An unsuspicious soul, and more than these,  
An unperceiv'd self-partiality  
My mental eye so film'd, I ne'er could deem  
That *me* they would deceive. A fatal grudge,  
Between the ancient town of Calabar  
And that the new yclep'd, of late prevail'd;  
This execrable trade in man the cause.  
We old possessors frequently receiv'd  
Kind letters from the Captains of the fleet,  
Then in our river moor'd. In flattering strains  
Our quarrels they lamented; all in one  
Engaging, if their friendship we would prove,  
Their ships by entering as our bulwarks sure,  
From every injury they would us defend;  
And vowing that they only wish'd to try  
All gentle means th' unnatural breach to heal.

“ I with my brother, many other Chiefs,  
Of leading citizens a numerous suite,

In ten canoes embark'd with heart-felt joy,  
Blessing the Heaven-sent ministers of peace.  
Throughout the fleet dispers'd, the nobles, each  
Had with officious care his place assign'd,  
According to his rank. The rest meanwhile  
On board receiv'd, or clustering in their barks,  
Foretell'd the blessings of returning peace.

“ We exil'd brothers, in th' adjoining hall,  
With pleasing hope the languid hours beguil'd,  
And vied in praising our protectors kind,  
But horrid interruption ! all at once  
The stern Commander, with his crew in arms,  
Rush'd in on us. We thro' the windows try'd  
To force our way : but wounded, overpower'd,  
And with amazement at the treason dire  
Benumb'd, our limbs their wonted pow'r forgot,  
And feebly yielded to these fetters vile.  
The vessel instantly its dreadful flames  
To vomit forth on our canoe begins.  
The fell attack unable to sustain,  
From under its possessors soon it sinks,  
And leaves them struggling 'midst the smoking gulph,  
To slavery or death an instant prey.  
The bloody signal forthwith every ship



Repeats. The wretched refugees anon,  
Unwarn'd of danger, are by it empal'd  
On every side. Some, whelm'd with their canoes,  
At once the bottom reach to rise no more.  
Others the mimic thunderbolt destroys.  
Some, flying from its vengeance, court the shore,  
Less fearing foes avow'd than perjur'd friends.

“ But now the fell conspiracy its deeps  
Unfolds. The new inhabitants, forewarn'd  
By their infernal allies, in their boats  
The flying wretches now pursuing, leave  
Their bushy coverts, in canoes embark,  
And with the thirst of kindred blood inspir'd  
By Christians, to their suppliant countrymen  
Ensnar'd beyond escape, with savage joy  
The merciless hand of death alone outstretch.

“ Oh! Calabar belov'd, ne'er by these eyes  
Again to be beheld, that fatal day  
Well may'st thou weep, and in thy lists enrol,  
As mark'd for vengeance by the hand of Heav'n,  
Three hundred of thy noblest sons it tore  
From thy maternal arms, by flames destroy'd,  
By waters swallow'd, or by chains debas'd,

“ Nor did this horrid sacrifice suffice,

The river yet was dy'd with blood, and strew'd  
With mangled corpes; when the hostile Chiefs,  
Whose rage for blood, like that of ravening beasts,  
The blood already shed had only wak'd,  
Before this ship in their canoe appear'd,  
My brother Amboe claiming as the price  
Of their confederacy. With generous warmth  
He pray'd our rugged Tyrant not to burst  
Thro' every tie of friendship, and of faith,  
Nor yield to the relentless rage of foes  
One who ne'er injur'd him, but often serv'd,  
The faithless Christian no intreaties move:  
The noble Amboe, for a slave exchange'd,  
Is from the proffer'd refuge headlong tofs'd.  
These eyes, in madness rolling, saw the deed  
Infernal powers had blush'd to perpetrate.  
Why should I add what Nature shrinks to tell,  
To me tho' far less horrid than the past?  
Immediately, without the form of proof,  
His head I from his body sever'd saw,  
Unable to prevent or venge the blow.  
Tho' with my brother, there in fetters bound,  
The fate of guiltless Amboe I escap'd,  
As less obnoxious to our cruel foes;

Yet wretched is the consolation left:

He dy'd a martyr'd noble, we live slaves."

Thus spoke the fallen Chief. A deep-fetch'd  
groan

The period of his mournful tale announc'd.

Ye British Merchants, why with wonder stare,

When now and then a vessel is cut off,

With all its crew, on the Barbarian coast?

Why th' authors of this ruin execrate

As monsters in man's fashion? Are not ye

The parents fell of desolation wide

Through Afric's shores and desarts unexplor'd?

Is not your very trade a war proclaim'd

Against man's nature? Blush then to refuse

To them reprisals, who have ne'er aggress'd.

Such vengeance is as natural to them,

As that against their native beasts of prey

Directed, which their peaceful huts invade.

Their tygers and their lions fierce are ye.

The ministers of Heaven's fell vengeance they

As really are to you, as those of old

Who bore its dread commission to destroy

Nations in guilt that ne'er with you might vie.

Their mental powers you scorn: but such their sense

Of retribution, of that very crew  
That injur'd them, the slow return they wait,  
And mark it out for vengeance: Does it shun  
The hostile shore? In substitution they  
A vessel from the self-same port consign  
To dread destruction, suddenly discern'd,  
Beyond mistake, by observation keen  
Of those peculiarities that stamp  
On manners, or on tongues their forms minute.

Ah! what a scene of misery lies hid  
From British eyes, below the hatches close,  
While the poor slaves in suffocation pant  
Beneath the blaze of equatorial day!  
When thro' th' uncover'd grate a breath of air  
Its scanty aid in pity seems to lend,  
Tho' by the steam exhaling half repell'd;  
One trembling strives the salutary valve  
To gain, but overcome by weakness, faints  
Ere half his journey's o'er. Another tempts  
The same adventure, dragging in his chains  
His dead companion: but the noisome load  
His strength surpassing, to the ground he falls,  
And in his fall a fellow-captive wounds.  
The heat insufferable, putrid air,



Unwholesome viands, treatment merciless,  
With never-ceasing anguish, quickly prove  
The certain harbingers of fell Disease,  
Which, in its hasty strides, to many deigns  
Emancipation from the hated yoke.  
Those who survive them, envious of their fate,  
'Mid excremental filth and mucous blood  
In dire pollution roll, like wounded beasts  
Weltering amidst the noisome shambles gore.

Thine eye avert not, Briton delicate,  
From this harsh picture. From the life 'tis drawn,  
And drawn for thee, that in it thou may'st trace  
Those grisly features and distorted limbs  
That call thee parent, and those gaping wounds  
Giv'n in the birth by thy unnatural hand;  
Or if not giv'n, yet canker'd, widen'd, own'd  
By thee, while to th' extreme of skill and pow'r  
Thy hand of mercy is not stretch'd to heal.

Behold that maid, possess'd of every charm  
That Nature boasts, if regular lineaments  
And faultless symmetry contribute aught  
To beauty's form; if in the various eye  
It beams or languishes, commands or pleads  
With rhetoric resistless; in the mouth

If e'er it smiles, or spreads the toils of love  
In playful dimples ; if at once it awes  
And captivates the heart in every look  
And motion ; if its subtile essence lies  
In framing to the comparative eye  
Th' external image of a lovely soul,  
Pure, noble, piteous and benevolent,  
Harmonious with itself and human kind.  
Yes—notwithstanding her dark hue, she's fair ;  
If beauty floats not lightly in the skin,  
Nature's mean rind, her garment outermost,  
(To fence the finer teguments design'd)  
Her coat camelion-like, the changeful sport  
Of every colour various light can form,  
Imbrown'd by tempests, blacken'd by rude blows,  
By jaundice yellow dy'd, by sickness green'd,  
By choler crimson'd, or by terror bleach'd ;  
Parch'd, rent, and peel'd by Phœbus' burning ray,  
Dug by Disease, by Labour rough outworn,  
Or shrivell'd by the surly grasp of Age ;  
Nay, mark'd by Fancy in its embryo state :  
Shame's writing tablet, Riot's sign-post coarse ;  
Effrontery's armour, Falsehood's bully firm ;  
And oft of Leprosy the fretwork harsh.

That maid, superior to the vulgar throng,  
Her tender years in ease and affluence pass'd,  
The staff, the comfort of her parents ag'd,  
Their only hope, a numerous progeny  
Surviving, while their early fate she mourn'd;  
Like some sweet flower, that on its sister-shoots,  
All blasted in the bud, 'mid varied pomp  
Looks sadly down, and sheds a dewy tear.  
Why should I tell her partnership in woe?  
Snatch'd from her father's door by ruffian hands,  
Thro' burning desarts rudely was she dragg'd  
Twelve times an hundred miles, no home to find,  
But in this common prison of her race.  
Ill-fated Zilia, what avail'd those charms,  
That, while they kindled, aw'd the beating hearts  
Of Guinea's savage sons, but to provoke  
Th' unbridled lust of Britons *civiliz'd*?  
Whom kings aspir'd to woo rough seamen seize,  
And scorning to solicit, boldly rob  
Of the last trace of Freedom's halcyon reign.  
By voluntary abstinence perturb'd,  
But more by common ravishment, at length  
Her noble soul disdains to exercise  
Its functions in a temple so defil'd.

She, chain'd on deck, her brutal lovers now  
Invites to her embrace, her rage to vent  
On them incautious; or this boon deny'd,  
In fruitless vengeance mangles her own limbs.  
Then, by extreme exertions overpower'd,  
Dissolving into softness, laughs and sings,  
Or to the murmuring winds her fate bewails:  
Now mourns her parents drown'd in hopeless grief,  
Then her lov'd swain, to whom her tender vows,  
Oft plighted in return, the trusty moon  
Alone had witness'd. Now she summons him  
To rescue her from slavery; then forbids,  
Remembering the foul stain, that marks her out  
As pure Love's antidote. Anon she sees  
In Fancy's airy fields to vengeance rise  
Her brothers brave, tho' long by Death disarm'd.

But who the callous annalist shall prove  
Of every day's destruction, or narrate  
With cold fidelity the havoc dire  
Of hell-born Av'rice, equally in arms,  
Strange policy! against itself and man?  
The numberless approaches who shall tell  
Of Death relentless? whether he attacks  
By burning fevers, or by chilling floods,



By waisting illness, or a bursting heart,  
By gnawing famine, or deep-galling wounds,  
By the oppressor's hands, or by th' oppress'd.

One night, while darkness reign'd, the dismal  
clank

Of chains was hear'd, in regular advance.  
Two gallant Negroes, not in strength impair'd  
By pining sickness, nor in soul debas'd  
By Slavery, their cruel bonds had burst,  
And hurried forward their companions chain'd  
To the fierce contest, big with liberty,  
Or death less dreaded than a fate unknown.  
A knife and cutlass, secretly procur'd,  
With wooden billets, were their only arms.

The trembling guards their weapons prov'd ; but  
soon

By valour overborne, they met their fate ;  
Or from the giddy tops protection sought.  
The decks all clear'd, they to the cabin flew,  
On their chief spoiler to avenge their wrongs,  
And with his minions to exchange those bonds,  
Too long their lot. But while they forward rush'd  
Undaunted, soon their lurking foes, arouz'd  
By noise of arms, 'mid the defenceless throng

Their whizzing messengers of death dispatch'd  
With dreadful success. Long th' unequal strife  
They stubbornly maintain'd, till by the load  
Of irons exhausted, of their leaders stript,  
By gushing wounds enervated, by dead  
Or dying, link'd to them by common chains,  
Entangled, they reluctantly retir'd  
To gain a short respite. Both from above,  
And from below, at once their enemies pour'd  
On deck, the moment critical to seize,  
Immediately its awful weight to lend  
To Fate's still-wavering balance, and adjudge  
To Liberty or Bondage, Life or Death.  
Embodied, arm'd, with courage fresh supply'd,  
One volley from their flame-emitting tubes  
The rallying squadron suddenly dispers'd  
To every corner that might cover shame.  
But by their victors re-assembled soon,  
A dreadful scene the glimmering lamps reveal,  
From frightful gashes few exemption boast.  
Some are so mangled, Avarice itself,  
With all its over-valuing, scorns to tempt  
The doubtful load. Without delay it gives  
To these the brutal mandate to embrace

A watery death. Some instantly with joy  
Obey the summons. Others only wait  
Of friends or kinsmen dear the last salute :  
Then, in their looks disdain and pleasure mix'd,  
Hide their disfigur'd limbs 'mid whelming waves.

The prime conspirators, whom battle spar'd,  
Are to a fate more terrible reserv'd.  
Old testy Death is bridled, tutor'd, brib'd  
To do his office tardily, and try  
Experiments of cruelty before  
Unpractis'd, to display his utmost skill  
In chasing Life from every outer work,  
Ere he the heart's strong garrison assault.  
Now he attacks with torments exquisite  
The parts most sensible.—But why attempt  
The horrid narrative, to human ears  
Itself a torment? O'er th' infernal scene  
Her tear-drench'd veil let heav'nly Mercy draw.

Say, barbarous Captain, for thy fell revenge  
Their unprovok'd rebellion dost thou plead  
As full apology? But who conferr'd  
On thee that right of sovereignty requir'd  
To stamp Rebellion's image on their deeds,  
And make them current or in heav'n or earth?

In what do they man's common rights transgress?  
Thou robb'st them of their Maker's precious boon:  
The means most habile for resum'g it  
Shall they not use? Dost thou of Freedom boast,  
Thy British birth-right, of the struggles great  
Made by thy gallant fires to hand it down  
To thee entire; yet Africans condemn  
For equal struggles? As a spurious child  
Thy country casts thee out. Dost plead the price  
Thou paid'st for them? To whom? To ravishers  
By thee suborn'd. Could they a right confer,  
Where they had none themselves? Did they not know  
A ready market for their villainy,  
They of necessity would cease to spoil.  
Wretch, stay thy cruel hand; thou art thyself  
The only rebel, trampling every law  
For mankind's bliss by God or man devis'd.

While regular breezes waft them on their way,  
The stormy islands rise at length to view,  
With joy the longing mariners them hail.  
Not so the slaves. The hated soil they spy,  
As wretched criminals that awful bar,  
Whence every moment they expect their doom.  
Forgive them, Britons, tho' they vainly dream,



You tear them from their darling native land,  
To make them food for yours. What? is it strange,  
They those as canibals voracious dread,  
Whom destitute of every human sense  
In all besides experience sad proclaims;  
Who with far greater ardor hunt for men  
Than they for cattle, Famine's rage to quell?  
To please th' unnatural palate tho' you kill'd,  
'Twere more compassion than to save alive,  
Your appetites at such expence to feed.  
Forgive this error; 'tis not half so great  
As that concerning them indulg'd by you.  
They count you canibals, you count them brutes;  
And treat them worse than all that range your fields.  
Or men allow'd, a race they must be own'd  
To you inferior, Nature's vilest dregs,  
Her offals foul, the very crudities  
Of chaos, that no better form would bear.  
Creative Power, forsooth, a species new  
Of men must make for light-complexion'd man  
To play the tyrant with, when beasts themselves  
The Heaven-invading rebel's sway renounc'd.

PART III.

THE wish'd-for haven gain'd, its shelly bed  
The massive anchors press. The trembling slaves  
Are hid below, left sharp-ey'd Merchandise  
Should thro' their sable covering, threadbare worn,  
The whiteness of their tell-tale bones espy.  
Nor hard were the discovery; for of some,  
Thro' constant friction on the naked boards,  
Their only bed, and galling of the filth  
Worse than Augean, the presumptuous bones  
Their feeble boundaries scorn, and gaze abroad;  
As weary captives thro' their prison-grate.  
Poor, scanty remnant of a vigorous swarm!  
The half-chew'd fragments of a thousand meals  
Devouring Death has made, his many mouths  
Of melancholy, madness, famine, sword,  
Scourge, halter, musket, manifold disease  
Wide-opening, as his changeful taste requir'd;  
The mangled morsels left to fill his maw,  
His appetite when keener! Now they're fed

Most bounteously, yet bounty not the cause;

Nor for their former miseries remorse.

When grovelling Avarice herself outdoes,

'Tis still her own base purposes to serve.

Like beasts for slaughter, they are fed for sale.

The ravages of Cruelty repair'd,

Th' inhuman traffic in humanity

Commences; while the miserable stock

Anew the gauntlet runs, thro' every step

Of galling ignominy trac'd before

Ev'n at the goal of Slavery's career

Unlimited, unpitied, unrepaid.

Hark! how the bawling Auctioneer proclaims

The varying price of blood, the purchasers

Meanwhile contending, who shall most debase

In value that high nature most of all

Debas'd in them, and at the meanest rate

Their great Creator's sullied image buy.

All-gracious Heav'n! can this that nature be

For which thou Earth didst wed and give thy life,

Price infinite! for ransom, which is here

Sold so contemptuously for Earth's mere dross?

Are these, in this strange trade engag'd, the men

Who tell the world their faith, that Thou for man,

Without regard to nation, tongue, or clime,  
Didst purchase freedom endless and supreme?  
In their profession, surely, they but sport  
With credulous minds. How else would they  
presume

Those to enslave to whom thou say'st, "Be free?"

Or of the brutal *scramble* is the scene  
Unfeelingly prepar'd? The fearful slaves  
In an apartment clos'd, where darkness reigns,  
The unknown issue wait. A signal giv'n,  
The ardent purchasers, with ropes supply'd,  
Rush in, and circle in their ample grasp  
Without distinction all they can surmise.  
But of the miserable captives who  
Can tell th' unequall'd terror, when these hounds  
Bloodthirsty, firm, impetuous, are loos'd  
On them, secluded from all means of flight  
Or self-defence? A universal shriek  
Immediately th' astonish'd welkin rends.  
The timid women for protection fly  
To those by nature their protectors fram'd.  
Some, swooning, for a while their spirits lose;  
While others lose them, ne'er to be recall'd.  
The men themselves, who hitherto contemn'd



The most outrageous thrusts of tyranny,  
This shock, th' apparent crisis of their fate,  
Unable to sustain, in every limb  
Now trembling to each other cling, that aid  
Imploring others vainly crave from them.  
A just resemblance of the dreadful scene  
Where can I find? All Nature it disclaims.  
The most ferocious animals would scorn  
Such wanton cruelty. Ingenious Art  
Hath in this strange device herself outdone.

But when Disease refuses to desert  
His strong intrenchments 'midst the captive crew,  
Not terrified by physic's power combin'd,  
Nor by the gentler hand of Nature lur'd,  
Medicinal viands bearing; many hang  
A hopeless burden on their tyrant's board.  
The fix'd expence of sale their niggard price  
Would fail to reimburse, and minish much  
That share of gain the lower orders claim,  
As faithful satellites of tyranny;  
Each in his various orb revolving round  
His lordly center, in resemblance strict,  
With systematic nhumanity.  
Ah! doubly wretched! what then is your fate,

By Avarice infatiate at all points  
Outrageously assail'd! A blest abode  
It in your country would no longer deign;  
And now into its own peculiar soil  
Denies admision. Sure, they are not sold;  
Nor do they e'er revisit Afric's shore.  
The love of human nature o'er their fate  
Would draw the veil of darkness; but stern Truth  
Bursts boldy thro', and to the view amaz'd  
Reveals these wretches starving in the ships,  
Or 'midst the weak efforts of dubious life  
Struggling for permanence, toss'd overboard;  
The recompence of faithful fellow-sharks,  
Their allies following from their native shores.

'Mongst various colonies dispers'd, new scenes  
Of misery them await. The cruel soil,  
As of her lords the spirit she imbib'd,  
The yearly sacrifice of thousands claims.  
Nor may a tithe her appetite suffice.  
The third or fourth of Guinea's sons alone  
She deigns as regular first-fruits to receive,  
Oblation for the rest, who still must yield  
Her homage, and respite from Death procure  
By grappling with indigenous Disease,

And proof of strength superior to its rage.

One day, while noontide's scorching violence  
chac'd

The fainting labourers to a cooling shade,

Whose kind vicinity invited them

Under its pitying covert to devour

Their lean repast, approach'd the mournful band

A servant of that Sovereign who proclaims

To captives liberty. With soul sincere

Long had he wished his tidings full of grace

To these poor captive Heathens to declare,

And save from slavery at least their souls.

Long had he labour'd with their rugged lord

Th' alleviation of their bonds to gain.

But still his gentle soul beneath its load

Of sorrow groan'd. To them Philander thus :

“ Hail! brethren of the common stock of man !

Your bonds I wail, and in your sorrows join ;

But though from country, kindred, friends belov'd,

Sever'd by seas immense, a gleam of light

Breaks through your darkness. Had your native land

Retain'd you still, your bodies had been free ;

But never had you heard of liberty

Far more exalted, for the soul procur'd

By Him who claims not Afric's plains alone,  
But all the world as his dominion wide.  
Forfake your Idols, and that Faith embrace  
Alone divine, the mildest known to man,  
A univerfal sigh, as by consent,  
Th' ungracious tidings answer'd. Downcast looks  
And gloomy silence their rejection seal'd.  
At length, a female, in whose piercing eye,  
To former miseries retrospective, flam'd  
Awaking indignation, silence broke.

“ Calypso once in pleasures unalloy'd  
Liv'd unsuspecting, of her friends the joy,  
The right hand of her husband, pride of sons.  
But while she courted on the river's brink  
The fanning breeze, and hugg'd her smiling babe,  
A crew in arms appear'd. In vain she try'd  
To 'scape them, or the adjacent village rouse.  
Fond husband! tender sons! I blame you not.  
Calypso's stifled cries ye could not hear.  
My frighten'd suckling join'd alone in grief,  
By its heart-piercing screams; while, swooning, I  
Was bound and toss'd aboard the hostile barge.  
One night, as on the leaky boards I lay,  
And vainly strove to soothe my crying babe,



Half-chok'd with water dash'd from side to side,  
My wrathful spoiler, in his sleep disturb'd,  
Tore from my arms my helpless innocent;  
And——oh! my limbs still quiver, while I tell  
The horrid deed—he plung'd it 'midst the stream.  
'Gainst Heav'n no African had thus rebell'd.  
He was a Christian, boasted of his name,  
And in reply to all my bitter complaints,  
My infant curs'd for Heathen unbaptiz'd.  
Such was his mercy, such the baptism  
He gave my babe, and such the powerful means  
He us'd to win me to his *better* faith.

“ Few days I in the floating prison pass'd,  
To which they waded me, till of my fate  
My husband, and the first-born of his race,  
The partners sad my doubtful eyes beheld.  
What warring passions rack'd my beating breast!  
Joy and amazement, love and terror mix'd!  
The selfish joy, that promis'd some solace  
From partnership in sufferings, check'd anon  
More generous sorrow for the hopeless fate  
Of those so dear, and anguish for the rest,  
By spoilers murder'd, or by famine gnaw'd.  
Poor, pity-pleading orphans, on a world

Unpitying left, or by their country sav'd,  
Yet only sav'd that Christians may destroy!

“ My mournful night a ray of joy illum'd  
Still in my sea-borne dungeon, while I knew,  
A treasure it contain'd to me so dear.  
At last, when for the dreaded sale prepar'd,  
Calypso hop'd her lot would common be  
With those she lov'd. But ah! the dire command,  
To part for ever, harshly was announc'd.  
In unknown language mercy we implor'd,  
We clasp'd our tyrants' knees, and kiss'd their feet,  
And to each other clung in fond embrace,  
With all the violence of despairing love.  
But us the unrelenting lash disjoin'd  
Never to meet again, till friendly Death  
Us to our country, free from care, restore.  
Already there rejoices my lov'd lord  
With his forefathers on their blissful plains.  
For madden'd by despair and rage, next day  
He threw away that life he scorn'd to spend  
In serving him our sacred bonds who burst.  
My son's fate Fame hath never yet propall'd:

“ But why on personal sufferings enlarge?  
These are but scraps of misery, crumbs of woe,

That fall from Cruelty's expensive board ;  
The gleanings of her harvest, with the heaps  
Her greedy scythe cuts down at once compar'd.  
Twelve times eleven captives, in three furs,  
Alive intomb'd 'midst gorging waves I saw.  
Their murderers charg'd them with no other crime  
Than sickness, their own cruelty the cause.  
Then call not, Christian, thy religion mild,  
Since such its fruits. If mild, 'twould doubtless  
tame

Those savage monsters that our race pursue.  
Say not, thy God gives freedom to the soul ;  
While all his worshippers, within our ken,  
Are slaves to every vice. This liberty,  
By thee extoll'd, will he on none bestow  
But those whose bodies are in bondage held ?  
Is this the price he for his boon demands ?  
Does he empower his servants first to rob  
Of every present blessing, and torment  
With every curse this life can wrestle with,  
Those to them guiltless ; then their griefs to mock  
With meagre hopes of blessings in that state,  
Oppression's rod that from the tyrant wrests ?  
Thy faith's a lie, or thou defam'st thy God."

Philander, struggling to suppress the tears  
Compassion crav'd for human miseries,  
And heart-felt sorrow for th' exposure foul  
Of Christianity to Heathenish scorn,  
With labouring breast reply'd ; " Such floods of woe,  
Let loose by faithless Christians, have on thee  
Their fury pour'd, and such the dreadful scenes  
Thou hast been witness to, I scarce admire  
Thy gross misapprehensions of our faith.  
To Slavery no auspicious look it lends.  
Ev'n at its root a deadly blow it aims :  
Commanding every soul, without reserve,  
To love his neighbour as himself he loves ;  
And whatsoever he from others claims,  
To them in every act of life to yield ;  
Love universal, constant and sincere,  
Demanding as its proof, adorning, end,  
The sole completion of its heav'n-taught law.  
Some who this faith profess are cruel, false,  
Unjust and impious, but itself disclaims  
All such professors as its greatest foes,  
Who under friendship's veil its vitals pierce.  
Judge not of all who bear the Christian name  
By your oppressors : happy Britain owns



Far other men, who live as they believe,  
Who Slavery curse, and for your Freedom strive."

"Delude us not," she cry'd, "the same dark hue  
Of soul all Christians marks, the common mass  
One gall embitters; ev'n the hated name  
Bears poison in it. Were it borne by me  
Calypso would herself be cruel, false,  
Unjust and impious, would her God blaspheme,  
Abjure her chastity and trade in blood.  
Were Britons better than our tyrants here,  
The very name of Slavery they would  
Exterminate. If some of them are friends  
To helpless Africans, few must they be,  
Else us from fetters would their friendship loose.  
If starving Negroe steals a bit of bread,  
And parts it with his spouse, she's flogg'd with him,  
Altho' she only ate of what he stole.  
But Britons call our murderers their sons;  
They send them food; their scourges they provide;  
They eat the produce of our wasted strength;  
Nay, to this sea-girt prison us convey.  
Our groans assail them 'mid their feasts of joy,  
And swell the gales that fan their distant land;  
Our tears increase the tides that lash their shores;

Our blood pollutes the luxuries they devour.  
Yes, Britons are our tyrants, while they smile  
On those who tyrannize! 'Tis Britain's gold  
That bribes our kinsmen us to steal and sell;  
'Tis Britain's scourge that flays us; 'tis her rod,  
O'er countless billows reaching, to the ground  
That smites us down; there her foot tramples us;  
Her hand life's pittance snatches from our lips;  
Her sword relentless sheds our guiltless blood."

All his efforts to win Calypso vain,  
Philander to another captive turn'd,  
Whose mein superior seem'd, whose pensive eye  
Spoke keen attention. "Many are," he said,  
"Your present woes, but those who Afric know  
As more severe your former lot describe.  
Your Masters give you gardens of your own.  
A day of rest in seven our holy law  
To you vouchsafes. Your liberty you may  
At length acquire. Your joy you oft proclaim  
In social music, or the sprightly dance."

'Twas Ephraim he address'd, of Calabar,  
Whose fate his labours to that glebe confin'd.  
With scornful smile he said, "They doubtless sport  
With your credulity such tales who vend.

If such our bliss in this unnatural soil,  
Why with such ardor pant we for our own?  
Why on the ocean so intensely gaze?  
Why kiss the sands to Africa most nigh,  
And hug the waves that may have wash'd her shore?  
Our babes why welcome we with tears alone,  
And grace the funerals of our friends with joy  
In all its transports? Death why covet more  
Than all the treasures of our griping lords?  
Why meet it with a smile, and when our hopes  
It trifles with, accelerate its pace?  
Are these the tokens of superior bliss?  
Harsh labour never ruffled Ephraim's hand;  
But now its slender bones are oft laid bare.  
Beneath the burden vile his back ne'er bow'd:  
Now 'tis so bow'd he cannot stand upright.  
His shadow in its weary path his eye  
Sees slowly moving, like a willow bent  
Before the blustering blast, and threatening still  
To hide its weakness in the weeping brook.

“ Four times four hours of labour every day  
Our cruel lord requires, and scarcely deigns  
A short respite our scanty meals to gorge.  
When night relieves us from our daily task,

Some hours our own necessities demand.  
Exhausted, we thro' dreary wilds must crawl,  
While not a gleam the circling veil pervades,  
And gather twigs our viands mean to dress,  
And warm our limbs with toil and wet benumb'd.  
Five fleeting hours for slumber scarce remain;  
And from this niggard boon the ceaseless mills  
Oft borrow a large portion, ne'er repaid.  
If sleep be banish'd, feeble is our strength  
For next day's labour. If its balmy pow'rs  
We welcome, oft a precious limb the price.  
Our garments scarcely screen us from the blast.  
Our food the tie reluctantly maintains  
'Twixt soul and body. With their liberal gift  
Of gardens still our tyrants us upbraid.  
But what are these? Our country's wilds supply'd  
Our calls more amply, of their own accord.  
These narrow spots some vegetables yield,  
Which yet unripe we greedily devour  
To still the rage of hunger, tho' assur'd  
That thus when still'd, in manifold disease  
A fatal vent more furiously it seeks.

“ If sleep some moments from our master steals,



If weakness spreads its languor o'er our toil,  
Or scanty seem our grass-loads, twice a day,  
With speechless labour for the cattle glean'd  
In various tracts of desert, blade by blade;  
For hapless Negro no excuse is heard.  
Our limbs the ruthless lash excoriates,  
And to the bones resistless digs its way.  
At work oft fainting, I have found with joy  
My spirit on the wing, its parting thought  
Immediately my distant fires to join.  
Illusion fond and fleeting! Soon again  
I into life have cruelly been lash'd.  
Its hideous smack, incessant thro' the day,  
Is our chief music. Now and then the song,  
Or dance we measure; gaiety not the cause,  
But fond solicitude to banish grief,  
Tho' for a moment only. That we may  
Our liberty at length procure, you boast.  
We may indeed; but only when our toil  
The tax defrays not; when its value's fled  
With youth, and strength, and joy; when hasty  
Death  
Threatens to rob our tyrants of their costs,  
And as a boon that liberty bestows

They ask a price for. Weekly days of rest  
Enjoy we also; but in name alone.

Ye Christians say, ye consecrate these days  
In honour of your God, while ye enforce  
Our profanation; for on them must we  
Our daily toil in gathering grafs pursue,  
And then our gardens cultivate, or starve.

Curs'd African! no scorn nor cruelty  
For thee suffices! Oft thy ears are slit  
For mere distinction. Ev'n thy life so vile,  
That Christian justice for its ravishment  
To claim a reparation scarcely deigns.

But hark! our taskmaster's harsh cry resounds!  
The moments stol'n our stripes must reimburse.  
Christian, farewell! thy faith I still disclaim,  
'Till its blind votaries learn the love of man."

But ah! the shriek of African distress  
Is not to Caribbean Isles confin'd.  
I hear it echoed thro' Columbia's plains  
And wilds immeasurable. Can it be?  
Sure, 'tis some strange illusion on the ear!  
Can those, who in the cause of Liberty  
Life's noblest channels emptied, claim a right  
To drain the cistern of a Negro's heart

In Slavery's constant waste? Yet such their claim,  
Myriads of Negroes must be sacrific'd  
In serving a new sense, a taste acquir'd  
By violence done to Nature. Could that box,  
The pungent herb containing, be supply'd  
No otherwise, in wrath and horror I  
Would cast it from me, as a new Pandora's,  
Fell source of ills, not only to a world  
Grown old in wickedness, but to the new.  
Hath Hell created this additional taste,  
Man to destroy by most unlikely means,  
And to its bitter scorn both worlds expose?

Columbia's gallant sons! is Liberty  
That prize inestimable sought by you  
At such expence? Then to your fellow-men  
Impart it generously, else every man  
Must disbelieve that Freedom was your end.  
To turbulence, injustice, lust of pow'r  
Your deeds shall be ascrib'd. For who can dream  
That those by love of Liberty sincere  
Are animated, brethren who enslave?  
Your sufferings under Britain's broken yoke  
Delineate to the utmost bounds of Truth,  
All adding that as probable was fear'd;

Still with your own dark vassalage compar'd,  
Ye had been free. Do ye to Heav'n remit  
Oblations grateful for its precious gift?  
All these as insincere it spurns, and you  
Accuses of ingratitude extreme,  
Its common boon while ye monopolize.

Your treasury of its scanty sums why drain  
In this expensive trade? Why stock your lands  
With mushroom-men, mere tenants of a day,  
Whose blanks incessantly must be supply'd  
By recent purchase, in their offspring who  
Themselves perpetuate not? A nation's wealth  
In its extent of population lies;  
And freeborn men alone will populate.  
Tho' others should, to cultivate your lands  
Must Africa be made a wilderness?  
Say, can it not suffice, that of your soil  
The better half already hath been drench'd  
With that offenceless blood itself had nurs'd?  
Must distant continents their victims lend  
To saturate the other, and awake  
The heav'n-arousing cry of blood from both?  
How can ye to your sons a love sincere  
Of Liberty transmit while they 'mong slaves



Are born, and from their very cradles taught  
To trample on their fellow-men as worms?  
Each slave you purchase, at the very heart  
Of Liberty a mortal thrust ye aim.  
Nay, do ye not a heritage of guilt  
To sons transmit, and fondly serve them heirs  
To that dread vengeance, which may them at length  
Subject to Slavery. Justly might ye fear,  
A race of tyrants for your future sons  
Ye now prepar'd; did not your cruelty,  
Here only politic, their growth prevent.

Why fled your fathers to a distant soil?  
The yoke of Slavery was it not to 'scape?  
And can ye hope your freedom to maintain  
By making others slaves? Oppress ye not  
The stranger, for ye know a stranger's heart,  
Wishful, perplex'd, and aching; wavering still  
'Twixt feeble hope and fear predominant;  
For in that land by you as lords possess'd,  
Like wretched Negroes, strangers once were ye.

Friends! Britons! Christians! Men! by what  
    dear name  
Shall I the audience of your hearts invoke,  
And your extreme exertions supplicate

For helpless Africans? Can Interest weigh?  
Then stop th' expenditure of countless sums  
In this vile trade; the national loss prevent  
Of thousands of your gallant mariners,  
Your natural guardians, by disease or want,  
Inhuman stripes or African revenge.  
A trade why idolize, of every vice  
Prolific nursery; that a race remits  
Of tyrants, rich indeed, but with the spoils  
Of innocents; a race of brutal lords,  
Of cruel husbands, and unfeeling fires;  
A race of murderers, soon to undermine  
The very base of all religion, law,  
And freedom, public or domestic weal?  
Heav'n's execration must that commerce mark,  
The seed of enmity that scatters wide  
Through peaceful nations, and all bonds dissolves  
'Twixt friends and brethren. Must a continent vast,  
For the mere luxuries of a petty isle,  
Be piecemeal sacrific'd? Exclaim no more  
'Gainst Spain's dread cruelties, that a new world  
Depopulated, while yourselves, alike  
In Mammon's worship madden'd, waste the old.  
Her sword is sheath'd, but Britain's still devours.

Sure, Hell incens'd at the defection vast  
Of human victims Christian shrines that stain'd,  
Through the new dawn of Evangelic light,  
This traffick hath devis'd, in Heathenish blood  
Its losses to repair, and on those pow'rs  
Who its fell domination have abjur'd  
Itself avenges, them its murdering tools  
In this new havock making. Boldly join  
Against this commerce infamous, that makes  
The name of *Christian*, noblest borne by man,  
A stench to Heathen blind, and bids him say  
In cruel scorn, with any crime when charg'd;  
“What? Do you take me for a Christian vile?”  
A commerce—bearing in its very form  
An abjuration of the Christian name;  
Nay, of humanity! The great efforts  
Of Courts your sacred interests who guard,  
Of learned Seminaries mark with awe;  
And let the venerable Senate hear  
Your voice unanimous. Then other Sharpes,  
Ramseys, and Clarksons shall their strength combine  
To stop the sweeping torrent. For your sins  
Vain your pretences to afflict your souls,  
And jointly deprecate th' Almighty's wrath.

Ah ! is not this the fast by him requir'd ?  
Freely the bonds of wickedness to loose,  
The load insufferable to remove,  
To bid the oppress'd go free, and every yoke  
To break in pieces ? Is it not to feed  
The starving wretch, the outcast to receive  
Within thy shelter, nakedness to clothe,  
And from *thy own flesh* not thyself to hide ?

But chiefly ye, great Senators, whose nod  
Imperial gives to nations blessed peace,  
Or war's dread ruin ; slavery to the free,  
Or freedom to the fetter'd slave ; give ear !  
The cry of misery from your hallowed walls  
Exclude not. Wretched fellow-men implore.  
Tho' gods by office, ye like them must die.  
Tho' abject worms are they, of pain or bliss  
Yet equally susceptible with you.  
Them scorn not as by native slavery  
Degraded. Stepdame-like hath Nature stamp'd  
Of infamy some marks infallible  
On their nativity ? With yokes of iron  
Around their necks, or fetters on their limbs,  
Light inauspicious did they first behold ?  
Foes to mankind are their own kings ? What then ?



Must ye from them your jurisprudence learn?  
But is not Slavery lawless? To deprive  
The innocent of Freedom, treason fell  
'Gainst Nature's law, the universal bond?  
Such reasoning ought a Briton to reject  
With indignation. Who hath made you free?  
Sure, that great Parent, who to every child  
This as his rightful patrimony gives.  
If others lose it by oppression foul,  
Must ye confirm the robbery? Ought ye not,  
As those by Freedom's tie alone who hold  
Your high preferments, rather from the hand  
Of Tyrants the oppressive rod to pluck?  
But many once were free, now bound by you,  
Judg'd by their own laws, by their *Purrow* rul'd,  
Their parliament, whose members they had chose.  
Tho' under Tyrants some were born, their loins  
Were lighter than your finger: their great aim  
In making slaves, your yawning yokes to fill.  
"But they were criminals." What law of your's  
Had they transgress'd? If some were justly doom'd  
By their own lords, yet criminals to you  
They could not be. Those only could inflict  
The punishment, who had the wrong receiv'd.

The work of Mercy trust not in the hands  
Of rugged Planters, nor the hope indulge  
That they from principles of interest true,  
From shame, remorse, or pity will reform.  
So blind, beyond the present moment's gain  
They cannot look ; for guilt no blushes know ;  
Their callous hearts compunctions never twinge ;  
Nor yearn their bowels, but on gilded dust.  
The gloomy Ethiop, groaning as their slave,  
As soon his skin shall change, as they, so long  
The slaves of wickedness, shall justice learn !

The dictates of false policy disclaim.  
Tho' bars eternal on this trade were laid,  
And liberty to every wretch proclaim'd ;  
Were population cherish'd, wages giv'n,  
And lands allotted as their property  
Unalienable ; those so kindly woo'd  
Would call your colonies their better home,  
Your planters parents, and their work perform  
With chearfulness. A nation new would rise  
Their narrow limits scarcely could contain.  
No more of insurrections would ye hear,  
Of runaways, of proffer'd price for blood.  
Your interest would be theirs. But for a time

Tho' trade should suffer, is not rectitude  
That policy alone from hazard free?  
Your treasury with th' unlawful price of blood  
Would ye replenish? Can the righteous Lord  
Delight in aught but justice? This alone  
Exalts a nation; sin a foul reproach  
To any people, to whatever height  
Of glory rais'd. Far greater now your guilt  
This trade in tolerating, than before,  
Its wickedness unthought of, unexplor'd,  
And its extent unknown. The piteous cry  
Of wretched Africans is Nature's voice  
To you as parents; nay, the voice of God  
To you as children of one common fire.

Oh! for one moment of compassion, deem  
These as your sons, from your embraces torn,  
Dragg'd to a distant land, in fetters bound,  
With toil and hunger wasted, beaten, lash'd,  
And often murder'd with impunity!  
What poignancy of anguish would ye feel!  
What would ye not for their deliverance dare?  
Your sons they are, while of this empire wide  
Ye are the common parents, bound to reach  
To every suffering child your equal arm,



The time may be, when ev'n your natural sons,  
Your hope, joy, pride, perpetual, dearer selves  
May under merciless oppressors groan.

Ah ! could ye see it, what then would ye wish  
To Negroes ye had done ; for ever lost  
The glorious opportunity ? At once  
The cry of African and Indian blood  
Your walls re-echo ; nay, it Heav'n hath reach'd,  
And if your ears ye stop, shall vengeance dread  
And sudden on your guilty heads bring down  
From its impartial bar. This cry reject,  
And thus to Slavery sons unborn consign.

The threatenings of the Universal Judge  
Ye judges of the earth with trembling hear !  
“ If ye JEHOVAH's voice of precept scorn,  
“ Your sons and daughters shall be captive led.\*  
“ Ye kine of Bashan, who the poor oppress  
“ And crush the needy ; by his holiness  
“ The God of Heav'n hath sworn : the days ap-  
proach  
“ When you, and your posterity, like fish,  
“ He shall with hooks from your possessions drag. †  
“ Who others captive leads, himself shall go  
“ Into captivity.” ‡ Heav'n's equal law is this.

\* Deut. xxviii. 15, 32, 46. † Am. iv. 12. ‡ Rev. xiii. 10.



On every nation known to History's page,  
 Whose hands were with Oppression's fruits defil'd,  
 The vials of his indignation dread  
 Hath he not emptied ; ev'n on Jacob's sons,  
 His favourite race ? Have ye alone receiv'd  
 Indemnity, or some all-powerful spell  
 Discover'd 'gainst the thunder-bolts of Heav'n ?  
 Ah ! no. These fields with Heathen blood bedew'd  
 Already hath the blood of Christians drench'd.  
 JEHOVAH's wrath Columbia's plains yet tell,  
 Where with the mother and her daughter he  
 His quarrel pleaded ; arming sons 'gainst fires,  
 And brother against brother. As the cause  
 Your impious commerce fain would ye disown.  
 But 'tis from Heav'n's great register proclaim'd ;  
 " Because they wickedness have plow'd, and reap'd  
 " Iniquity, the mother hath been dash'd  
 " In pieces on her children.\* As the fire,  
 " Your wickedness around you hath devour'd ;  
 " For fuel therefore shall the people be :  
 " No man in pity shall his brother spare."†  
 Oft are not your plantations visited

\* Hof. xiii. 14.

† Isa. ix. 18, 19. x. 1, 4.

With dreadful hurricanes ; the fields laid waste,  
The houses swept away, th' inhabitants  
Mid rains buried, and your trading ships  
Dash'd one against another, or devour'd  
By yawning billows ? Britons, then give ear  
To th' awful voice of an incensed God.  
It bellows in the thunder, in the storm  
It rages, in the sweeping torrent roars.  
The forked lightnings are his arrows fell ;  
The dreadful balls of fire, that round you burst  
Midst horrid darkness, are his messengers  
Of indignation. Thus those fruits he blasts,  
Rear'd on Oppression's stem ; those stately domes,  
Built with the spoils of innocents, destroys ;  
Consumes those fields by guiltless blood enrich'd ;  
Those vessels, gaping to devour the gain  
Of robbery, wrecks ; the spoilers oft themselves  
Involv'd in ruin with their cursed spoils.  
His justice can ye charge, or disavow  
Such visitations as its awful proofs ?  
To "rain a tempest horrible on those  
"Who violence love ;" hath not th' Eternal vow'd,  
"Because he loveth right ?"† The heritage

† Ps. xi. 6, 7.

" Of the oppressor from th' Almighty this ;

" Unstable, like the moth's, his house he builds.

" Like rushing waters, terrors on him seize.

" Him in the night a tempest steals away :

" The boisterous East-wind forces him along,

" And from his place him into darkness hurls."†

Thus did he visit Egypt's land of slaves,

When claiming liberty for his oppress'd.

" With hail their vines, with frost their sycamores

" He blasted ; to the storm their cattle gave,

" And to the burning thunder-bolts their flocks :

" On them the fierceness of his wrath he cast."‡

" This, ye who swallow up the needy, hear :

" Who sell the poor for silver, or exchange

" In traffick vile ; the great JEHOVAH swears :

" I, surely, none of all your impious deeds

" Will e'er forget. Shall not the land for this

" Be seiz'd with trembling ? Every tenant mourn ?

" My anger in the swelling flood shall rise ;

" And as by Egypt's troubled stream, the soil

" Shall from its place be torn, and 'midst the waves

† Job xxvii. 13, 18, 20, 21.      ‡ Pf. lxxviii. 47, 49.



" Be buried. Ev'n at noon the sun affham'd  
" Shall veil his head, and in the cloudless day  
" The earth in horrid darkness will Ehide."

Am. viii. 4, 6, 9.



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FINIS.

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